

A WOMAN'S ENCHANTMENT

BY WILLIAM LE QUEUX
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(Continued from Page 8.)

an adventurer, but that he is an

"Have you yet spoken to him con-

cerning his allegations?"

"Not yet. But when I do I shall

speak out very straight," I said.

"Granny is one of my best friends, and

he'll have to answer to me for these

slandering."

"But you won't make a scene here,

Mr. Ralston, will you?" she asked,

bending forward anxiously. "Dad

would never forgive me for repeating

to you what Mr. Garshore has told

me."

"Then he has spoken to your father

?"

"I think so—that's the worst of it."

"Why do you believe he has?"

"Because only this morning when I

wanted to mention Mr. Gough casual-

ly while he and I were in the library

alone, he snatched up something about

hoping 'that man' would never dare to

show his face again at Stapleton."

I hit my lip. For I saw that Garshore

had been mischief making, and that

the seeds of suspicion he had sown

could take a good deal of uprooting.

For a moment I said nothing. I was

trying to see some solution of the

great difficulty now presenting itself.

"So he has been endeavoring to

poison your father's mind—eh? For

what reason, I wonder?" I asked.

"Perhaps, Myra, he has aspirations to

your hand, and is trying to take Gran-

ny's place in your heart."

"Take Granny's place?" she cried re-

sentfully. "I love Granny far too much.

He is I confess to you—his best friend

—the only man I have ever loved."

she added in a low, earnest tone,

rushing at me with those wonderful

blue-gray eyes that always held even

myself, proud, beset, that I was, in

a kind of domination.

"But I thought you said you liked

Garshore?" I remarked.

"I did, when we first met. But I

can now see that in telling dad these

extraordinary stories concerning my

lover he has some distinct ulterior

motive."

"Which is certain to be in favor of

himself," I assured her. "I happen to

know something of this man, Myra,

and I warn you against him. I can-

not tell you all until Granny permits

me, but I can assure you that Ralph

Garshore is his most bitter enemy.

The dear old chap bears no malice to-

wards anybody."

"Or what?" she asked quickly.

"What could he do?"

"He could make an exposure which

would place Garshore in a very differ-

ent light in your father's eyes. In-

deed, I very much doubt whether, if

your dad knew the truth, he would

keep him as guest under his roof an-

other hour."

"You speak in enigmas, Mr. Ral-

ston," she said, puzzled. "Cannot you

be more explicit?"

"No. I would only appeal to you

for Granny's sake to disregard all

these extraordinary fictions which

this fellow is evidently spreading. He

loves you, Myra, and is true to you."

"And I will be true to him, Mr. Ral-

ston. I promise you," the sweet-faced

girl assured me. "What Garshore has

told me shall make no difference. Ah!

if he would only reply to my letters."

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and fragrance to the breath.Miss Myra?" asked the visitor, who,
having hurried along the bank, was
awaiting us.

"No thank you," was her haughty

response. "I will not remain to hear

unfounded allegations against my

friends." And she started away to-

ward the Grange.

"Well," I said, turning to the man

was Granny's bitterest enemy.

"And now tell me what it is you say

regarding the man who is not here to

defend himself."

"I was speaking to Miss Stapleton—

not to you," he replied, with a sneer.

"I am Gough's friend," I declared

quickly. "You know that. Therefore,

I, Philip Ralston, demand an explana-

tion."

"Which I refuse to give, my dear

sir," he laughed. "So please calm

yourself. I have merely warned the

dear old gentleman and his daughter

of an adventurer."

"You also called him an assassin

just now?"

"I repeat my words. If you desire

proof ask at New Scotland Yard," and

he smiled grimly at my confusion.

What could I say? Had not Gran-

ny's flight been in itself proof of his

guilt? And yet, why was this man

also living in secrecy in Yorkshire,

when believed by all to be on the con-

tinent?

Where could be the woman who was

his tool, the handsome adventures,

Lydia Popescu? The dead woman was

certainly not her.

"A slanders should furnish proof

himself," I remarked at last. "This

you are apparently unable to do. You

come here, accept Mr. Stapleton's hos-

pitality and malign one of his best

friends—the man who is to marry his

daughter. Do you think I, Gough's

friend, will allow these statements to

pass unchallenged?"

"Your attitude, my dear sir, does

not concern me in the least. Until a

few hours ago I had no knowledge of

your existence."

"Then of that I'm most gratified," I

said, thrusting my hands into my

trouser pockets. "Because I happen

to know much more regarding you

than you imagine!"

His brows knit, and for a moment

he regarded me with a hard sinister

look, an expression of fear and un-

certainty. As he stood there in his

gray flannels and straw hat he had

the manner and bearing of a foe, as-

suming that superiority which must

be denounced as "caddish" by any

gentleman. His perfectly kept hands,

with their three diamond rings; his

vest ornamented by pearl buttons with

diamond centers; and his patent leath-

er boots in lieu of serviceable brown

shoes were all out of place in the

country.

"Yes; he was a cad of the first wa-

ter. How Granny could ever have

taken to him in the first place was a

mystery. It was, of course, owing to

the generosity of the dear old boy's

kind heart. All his mistakes, indeed,

had been caused by his openness of

manner, his overflowing generosity

and his religion of Friedrich Nietz-

sche.

This fellow had taken advantage of

it to flitch from his friend a valuable

concession, and so ruin him. By a

single coup he had secured a com-

fortable fortune, and had now come

to visit the Stapletons with one fixed

purpose—the exposure of the man

whom he had so misled and so shame-

fully swindled.

"Whatever you may know regarding

me is quite immaterial," he exclaimed,

insolently. "The Stapletons are my

friends, and it is therefore my duty

to warn them that they are being im-

posed upon by a man whose whole

career has been one long series of ad-

ventures. He has never done a single

honest day's work in his life, and is a

chevalier d'industrie who is known in

almost every town of note from Lib-

on to Odessa."

"I laughed in the fellow's face.

"This is really amusing, Mr. Gar-

shore!" I declared. "So you have the

infernal audacity to set yourself up as

a censor of business morality, eh?"

"I tell you that Stapleton believes

your friend to be a wealthy man,

whereas he doesn't know where the

next five is coming from," he ex-

claimed, angrily.

"And pray is he the only man whom

the world believes to be well off and

well in reality is hard up? If he

were," I declared, "then this world of

ours would be a very different place."

"I am speaking of Granville Gough—

the man whose ingenuity as an adven-

turer is unparalleled."

"The man, you should rather say,

whose bitterest enemy has never

charged with dishonesty or with a

mean action toward a friend," I ad-

ded, looking him straight in the face.

"Remember, Mr. Garshore, that I am

Granville Gough's friend, and as he is

absent and cannot refute your abomi-

nable calumnies, I take it upon my-

self to do so."

To be Continued.)

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